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NURSING EDUCATION AND EARNING POWER

DEAR EDITOR; Miss Ruth Brewster Sherman's article on "Education and Earning Power" seems to me dangerously misleading. In the first place she fairly discounts in her paper all other branches of nursing work except private nursing.

In the executive field of hospital work there are hundreds of positions paying from \$900 a year, with maintenance, (fully equal to an extra \$600), and a month's vacation, up to \$3000 with maintenance (equal to whatever a comfortable suite of sitting-room, bed-room, bath, laundry and board would come to. These positions are won by well-educated nurses with good natural abilities, in periods varying from two or three years after graduation for the lesser positions; up to ten or fifteen years' graduate experience for those holding the most important positions.

Let us consider the statistics of one hospital which may be considered fairly typical of many of our large hospitals caring for 300 or more patients.

There are thirteen graduates employed, at salaries ranging from \$900 a year upward, with maintenance. There are fourteen new graduates at salaries of \$480 to \$600 with maintenance. Of the forty graduates outside of the hospital who are doing institution work, who were graduated since 1910, there are thirty who are earning \$900 or \$1000 with maintenance, and ten of the recent graduates are earning from \$600 to \$800 with maintenance.

Of the outside graduates in institutions, at least sixty are earning from \$1200, to \$3000 with maintenance (which means a suite of rooms, board and laundry). In hospital positions there is usually no expense for sickness.

There is a great demand in the other branches of nursing work for instructors, supervisors and directors; positions that carry very good salaries.

I believe that nursing offers better opportunities to women of average ability, good character and training than any other profession and that it offers better opportunities in proportion to time and money invested to women of exceptional ability, than any other profession. This leaves out of consideration people who have some extraordinary talent.

In the *Journal of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae*, of April 1913, one gets the following statistics concerning college graduates: of those teachers receiving salaries of between \$700 and \$900 (without maintenance), 87 per cent have been working ten years or less; 12 per cent more than 10 years; of those receiving salaries from \$1100 to \$1300, 65 per cent have worked over ten years; of those receiving \$1300 to \$1500, 41 per cent have worked over ten years. Of those doing social service work, the average salaries range from \$900 to \$1300 and those are not received, usually, until the third or fourth year. Of those engaged in secretarial work, one-half receive less than \$1100, and that not usually until after three or four years. Of six who took up nursing, two receive \$1500 or more during the first and second years.

I cannot make these statistics agree with Miss Sherman's statement that the college-trained woman in other professions in the long run "usually earns more" and "reaches a greater earning capacity at a much younger age than a nurse can."

If Miss Sherman is comparing the other professions with private nursing only, perhaps her statement may be accurate, but whose fault is it that private nurses do not increase in earning capacity as they increase in experience. How many have tried a sliding scale and have dared to compete on merit?

It is a pity that so many of the older graduates cling to their memories of what

was in the earlier days of their training, instead of keeping in touch with the development and improvement in our schools! E. M. of West Virginia, writes as if she thought all schools are now and ever will be of the type she trained in.

Florence Nightingale, the most cultivated woman probably that has ever trained as a nurse, did not do her great work in the destructive spirit of criticism but in a constructive spirit, trying to cast aside what was bad to make room for what was better.

Massachusetts.

SARA E. PARSONS

LETTERS FROM NAVY NURSES

III

DEAR EDITOR: The arrival of the transport is the event of greatest interest, bringing new faces, mail from loved ones and friends, and the JOURNAL, our connecting link with professional activities. The day is prolonged indefinitely until we receive, and read our mail; and then follows the writing period. Our answers are carried to Manila on the next transport. No wonder Sister says the dates on my letters make her dizzy! And real answers mean repeated questions, since the subject matter of the home letters has long since been forgotten. Only those who have been isolated, as we are, can form any idea of the avidity with which we receive "news" and how catholic we become regarding the kind of news.

The Chamorros continue to be very kindly disposed toward us and there has not been the slightest friction with the native nurses. We are obliged to teach by practical demonstration and when a treatment is learned or a system established, everything runs smoothly. Let there be the least change, however (such as a different hour for a medication), and a great disturbance is felt. I doubt if we shall ever be able to have them use any other than a 1-2000 bichloride solution!

The babies have improved wonderfully under a more methodical system of feeding and cleansing and the mothers show their appreciation by appearing at our quarters with a live chicken, some eggs or flowers. Usually these articles are silently thrust upon us and the donor beats a hasty retreat.

The dress of the young native women has been changed "by order of the governor." Formerly these school girls wore trains, but short skirts for small girls are now in vogue. I have not been able to discover that there is a distinction in caste. In Tutuila, you know, the pure blood women never attempt any deviation from the native costume, but it may be there is no pure strain left in Guam.

We have assisted at three laparotomies; the last was a native of Trinidad whose three hundred pounds did not prevent her from riding a bicycle. All have been tractable patients, they are doing well, and the medical officers seem particularly pleased with the result.

Miss H., one of the teachers, asked for some sewing for the schools. We cut out about three dozen gowns which are to be distributed among the pupils. The women patients are also helping, and crib sheets are being rapidly made, but I doubt if we shall ever catch up with the demand. We are testing the sewing possibilities of the Islanders in another way. Miss C.'s trunk did not arrive and has not yet materialized. We obtained drilling from the stores and have found a Japanese tailor who has attempted the uniform skirt, while a kindly native woman has earned our gratitude and money by making the waists.